



**Martin O'Malley, Governor   Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor  
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*The Office of Community Initiatives coordinates community and volunteer service activities in Maryland; develops and coordinates the Governor's policy agenda affecting community programs and initiatives; advises the Governor on policies to enhance and improve the delivery of community and volunteer services; and serves as liaison to the Corporation for National and Community Service.*

**For Immediate Release**

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***“Partnering All Faiths to End Domestic Violence”  
Weekend of Ministry Calls Everyone to Reach Out and Speak Out***

**(BALTIMORE, MD)** In many churches synagogues, temples and mosques, discussion of domestic violence is almost taboo. Even among friends and family, it is an awkward and embarrassing topic to broach. As a result, victims of domestic violence often suffer abuse in silence and isolation. To highlight the need for increased communication and in recognition of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Interfaith Domestic Violence Initiative is asking interfaith leaders in the Baltimore metropolitan area to commit to addressing domestic violence in their congregations in some form over the “Weekend of Ministry,” October 25-27.

Through a partnership that includes the Office of the Governor and the Office of the Mayor, the initiative seeks to build on the close relationships many clergy members have with their congregants as a way to connect with victims of domestic violence. The initiative is the brainchild of Judge Karen C. Friedman who teamed up with Judge David W. Young and Judge Katie O'Malley to encourage Baltimore's interfaith leaders and institutions to dedicate a portion of their ministries or fellowship activities to domestic violence during the Weekend of Ministry. The initiative has drawn support from domestic violence survivors, service providers and advocates, including Baltimore Ravens defensive end, Chris Canty.

“This initiative is attempting to unite all faith against domestic violence. It is important for a victim of domestic violence to know that she or he can turn to their clergy person for guidance and support,” said Judge Friedman.

Domestic violence not only threatens an individual's physical and emotional well-being, it often separates victims from those who care about them and can offer assistance. According to Baltimore City Police Department (BCPD) data, nine homicides connected to domestic

violence have already occurred this year. In addition, last year, the BCPD received over 22,000 calls for service related to domestic violence.

For information on the Interfaith Domestic Violence Initiative and to pledge participation in the Weekend of Ministry go to [www.community.maryland.gov](http://www.community.maryland.gov). Share experiences and information on domestic violence on Twitter @GOCIMD #IDVI. For help, call the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence statewide helpline at 1-800-MD-HELPS or go to [www.mnaadv.org](http://www.mnaadv.org).

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